

Floridians, exemplified by deep community involvement, civility, and practical commonsense decision-making. George is a Republican and is my dear friend.

□ 1045

George got his start working for St. Petersburg Congressman Bill Cramer. Upon Mr. Cramer's retirement, he began an extraordinary 35-year run with Representative Cramer's successor, Congressman Bill Young. George served on his Washington, D.C., staff and was best known throughout the county as Congressman Young's longtime district director.

In 2007, he made the jump to elected office himself, joining the Clearwater City Council. George served on the council for 5 years before rising to the mayor's office in 2012. At city hall, Mayor Cretekos governed Clearwater with unfaltering professionalism, shepherding major initiatives such as the \$60-plus million Imagine Clearwater downtown waterfront restoration project. In addition to his mayoral role, he served as the president of the Barrier Islands Government Council and the Pinellas County Mayors' Council.

Throughout his public career, he was first to listen, quick to find compromise, and, foremost, committed to the well-being of his constituents.

I have known George for many, many years. He has always gone out of his way to look out for ways in our community to help out, large and small. He served on the OneBlood Tampa Bay area board, donating over 60 gallons of blood during his lifetime. He continues to be a volunteer courier for the National Bone Marrow Donor Program and remains very involved with the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Clearwater, Florida.

He was awarded numerous accolades for his contributions, notably from the Salvation Army as well as the Greater Tampa Bay Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

George was an elected official, but he was never afraid to roll up his sleeves and quietly do the hard work behind the scenes. He has volunteered to build homes for Habitat for Humanity. He helped with the Clearwater Jazz Festival. He serves dinners for the needy. He has worked 12-plus-hour shifts for days on end as a Pinellas County poll worker.

Mr. Speaker, please join me, once again, in commemorating the career of Mayor George Cretekos—my fellow Greek, by the way—recognizing his outstanding service and dedication to our community.

He has served admirably, with humility. His leadership and character distinguish him as a gold standard for public service. His good works will be remembered for decades to come.

AMERICAN INNOVATION IS IN THE EXPRESS LANE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from

North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) for 5 minutes.

Ms. FOXX of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, American innovation is in the express lane, and we have President Trump and both the private and public sectors to thank.

The progress that has been made to date on viable vaccine candidates is astonishing, and it is a promising sign for the American people.

It is truly a testament to the grit and resilience that resides within this country, and we have come a long way since the beginning of this year.

We are on the cusp of eradicating COVID-19 once and for all, and the livelihoods of the American people will be restored.

Mr. Speaker, never bet against American innovation. It has the power to change the world.

PERSONAL BATTLE WITH COVID-19

Ms. FOXX of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, recently, my family faced a test that was unlike any we had faced before: fighting COVID-19.

My husband contracted the virus and spent 4 days in Watauga Medical Center, where he received excellent care from doctors and nurses. I tested positive, was totally asymptomatic, but, of course, was quarantined and understand the frustration associated with that. Thankfully, though, I was able to continue my work without interruption, unlike so many others.

We have always been grateful for those in healthcare, treating others at their own risk, but we understand the situation they are facing better than ever.

We are even more grateful for the men and women fighting on the front lines to protect the American people. They do so not out of self-interest but rather through a solemn commitment to protect the sanctity of human life.

We will be forever grateful for their countless sacrifices and will continue to pray for their safety and for God's grace to continue.

To those impeccable men and women serving, from the bottom of my heart, thank you.

DON'T TREAT BIPARTISANSHIP LIKE A FOUR-LETTER WORD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. HURD) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HURD of Texas. Mr. Speaker, our Nation is full of opportunity.

How else could a young Black kid from San Antonio, Texas, grow up to come to Congress to represent a majority Latino district and get 17 pieces of legislation signed into law?

My mom always taught me: You are either part of the problem or you are part of the solution. So, I ran for Congress, and over the past 6 years, I have done everything I can to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to get things done.

During my tenure, I have had some legislative lows, like being two signa-

tures short of a successful discharge petition which would have led to a DACA fix being put on the President's desk.

We should never stop fighting for these folks who are part of our American family. People like John Lewis taught us that this kind of work may be long, and it may be hard, but it is righteous.

At the same time, I have had some legislative highs:

Being the lead Republican, with my friend JOSÉ SERRANO, to get the National Museum of the American Latino Act unanimously passed out of this House of Representatives—after 26 years, we finally did it.

Modernizing IT procurement laws so that the government provides better digital-facing services and establishing a national strategy to ensure the U.S. stays a leader in artificial intelligence are going to pay off for years.

I came to Congress to make our Nation safer. When I was first elected, ISIS was our biggest national security threat. As we look at the years ahead, the nature of the threat is distinctly different.

The next generation-defining battle, which has already begun, is against the Chinese Communist Party. China is trying to supplant the United States as the sole superpower in this world by 2049.

Every American should care about this struggle because we face a potential future where Mandarin and the yuan, not English and the dollar, dominate the global economy. The winner of this generation-defining struggle will not just affect our economy but will shape the rest of the century for the entire world.

Within this context of great power competition, I urge my colleagues to confront this national security threat with a simple principle that I learned from my time in the CIA: Be nice with nice guys and tough with tough guys.

Back home, I have learned another simple principle: Show up. I was willing to show up to places others weren't, listen to what folks had to say, and work across the aisle to solve problems. We were able to find solutions to some of the most difficult problems plaguing our constituents by empowering people, not the government.

I could not have done any of this without my staff. From day one, my team and I held the belief that no problem was too small and that no goal was too big. This mentality is how we ended up helping a high-schooler who had an idea of preventing her friends from distracted driving, and it is how we spent a year working on a national strategy for artificial intelligence.

Despite these legislative successes, the thing I will remember most is helping constituents whose names folks don't know battle the Federal bureaucracy. Making a difference in the lives of those folks is something I will cherish forever.

To all of my staff over the years, especially Nancy Pack, thank you for